crop husbandry, animal husbandry and fishery, minor irrigation projects, rural development works, agricultural marketing schemes and schemes for water harvesting and conservation, keeping in view the agro-climatic conditions, natural resources and technological possibilities in each district. A comprehensive State Agricultural Plan (SAP) would be prepared by the States by integrating the DAPs.

The States have been provided flexibility and autonomy in the process of planning as well as selection, approval and execution of schemes under RKVY. The State Level Sanctioning Committee (SLSC) headed by the Chief Secretary approves the projects for implementation under RKVY.

(b) During 2007-08, out of 24 States eligible under the scheme, 22 States held the SLSC meetings and approved projects on the basis of their plan under RKVY. None of the Union Territories convened the SLSC meetings. An amount of Rs. 1246.89 crore was released by the Central Government to the States/UTs during 2007-08. During the current year, out of 22 eligible States, 17 States have already held SLSC meetings for approval of projects and funds to the tune of Rs. 1094.65 crore have been released to the States/UTs so far.

Gas-based fertilizer plants in Uttar Pradesh

*112. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) with the huge discovery of natural gas in the Krishna-Godavari and Mahanadi basin, whether his Ministry has planned a road map for establishing gas based fertilizer plants in the country;

(b) whether any study has been undertaken to convert coal/Nafta based fertilizer plants into gas-based fertilizer plants to make them economically viable;

(c) if so, the details in this regard; and

(d) how many such plants will be established in Uttar Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (d) The Government has recently finalized and announced a policy for New Investments in Urea Sector in order to attract new investments in this sector for setting up of gas based urea projects in the country. Further, the Government has already decided to accord highest priority in allocation of gas for the fertilizer sector. It is expected that the prospective investors will take their own commercial decision for investments in urea sector and location of such projects, based on the above announced policy and the availability of natural gas from the Krishna-Godavari-Mahanadi basin.

As regards non-gas based fertilizers units in the country, the New Pricing Scheme Stage-III for existing urea units has made it mandatory for all non-gas based units to convert into gas by March, 2010. To incentivize the conversion of above units it has been provided that the energy efficiency due to conversion of units to gas will be left with the units for first five years of commercial production to enable them to recover the investment towards conversion of their units.

Bypassing of Dental Council of India

*113. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had granted permission to a large number of dental colleges to conduct post-graduate courses in surgery bypassing or disregarding the views of Dental Council of India;

(b) if so, what are the number of such Dental Colleges which have been given permission for post-graduate courses in surgery;

(c) whether it is also a fact that recommendations of Dental Council of India is necessary for admission of students in dental colleges, including post-graduate courses in dental surgery; and

(d) if so, under which rule Government has flouted this mandatory provision?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS): (a) to (d) In terms of Section 10 A (2) (a) of the Dentists (Amendment) Act, 1993, it is mandatory for the Central Government to forward each scheme/application of the Dental Colleges for starting post graduate courses to the DCI for its recommendations. However, Section 10 A (4) gives final powers to the Central Government to consider the recommendations of the Council and take decision either to approve or disapprove the scheme after considering the scheme, recommendations of the DCI and additional information, if any.

Therefore, the recommendations of the Dental Council of India (DCI) are not final but recommendatory in nature and it is for the Central Government to take a final view in the matter and, where necessary, collect additional information by way of various methods including inspection etc. before arriving at a final decision.

Accordingly, in order to verify the compliance reports submitted by dental colleges *vis-a-vis* the negative recommendations of the DCI, the Central Government sent the Central Inspection Teams in 22 dental colleges. However, the Central Government granted permission to 17 dental colleges only in those specialities in which they fulfilled the eligibility criteria for starting the MDS courses.

Contaminated drinking water

*114. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the increasing health hazards posed by unsafe/contaminated drinking water with high levels of heavy metals and pesticides used by farmers in many cities and States; and

(b) if so, the steps Government proposes to take to address this issue?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS): (a) and (b) Consumption of contaminated water is a health hazard. Prolonged use of water contaminated with arsenic for drinking causes diseases like dermatosis, keratosis, conjunctivitis, bronchitis, gastro-enteritis in the initial stage and peripheral neuropathis, hepatopathis melanosis, de-pigmentation and hyper-keratosis, The effect of excessive amount of fluoride on human body is dental molting, skeletal and crippling fluorosis. Heavy metals like lead may cause irreversible brain damage, seizure coma, fatigue, irritability etc. and repeated prolonged exposure to mercury can result in severe disturbances in central nervous system, kidneys, liver etc.